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The Forgotten Palace: Morocco's al-Badīʿ as a Symbol of Caliphal Splendor*

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Introduction

IN 1594, the Moroccan sultan Aḥmad al-Manṣūr unveiled his glorious new palace, al-Badīʿ in Marrakesh, before an audience that included all of the most important officials and notables. At one point during the ceremonies, Mawlāy Aḥmad "encountered a man who had obtained a reputation for holiness. 'What do you think of this palace?,' the sultan inquired. The man's response was 'When it is demolished, it will create a tremendous pile of rubble.' At this, al-Manṣūr became very agitated, because he considered it to be a bad omen for the future."[1]

The holy man's words proved to be prophetic. Although it would be considered the most spectacular architectural achievement of al-Manṣūr's Saʿdī dynasty, al-Badīʿ would remain standing for only 117 years beyond the date of these opening ceremonies. The ʿAlawī sultan Mawlāy Ismāʿīl considered the structure a rival to his own glory and ordered it to be torn down in 1711. Today, all that remains of this re-

*To R. Stephen Humphreys, who was not only an advisor during graduate school but a role model and a friend. His sage advice (both for my career and my life) has helped guide my decisions over the years and I have imitated his example in my teaching, mentoring of students, and my research. If I can accomplish half of what he has, I will consider my career a success.

markable palace are written descriptions from contemporaries, as well as some ruins within the *qaṣba* of Marrakesh. In addition to its physical demolition, al-Badīʿ appears to have lost its place among the great examples of Islamic palace architecture. Written off as an inferior copy of earlier Andalusian monuments, al-Badīʿ has largely been neglected by modern scholars.

But it seems that this palace has been too quickly forgotten. While it is true that al-Badīʿ draws from Ottoman and Andalusian examples, this does not mean that Saʿdī architecture represents only a stale imitation of earlier Andalusian precedent. In fact, there are indications that al-Badīʿ's level of sophistication may have rivaled that of the earlier Alhambra of Granada, considered by many to be the greatest of the Andalusian palaces. An examination of the historical evidence surrounding al-Badīʿ's construction reveals a project that was driven by the unique circumstances of al-Manṣūr's Morocco, and a palace that deserves to be considered in its own right as one of the great royal monuments of the Early Modern period.

Islamic Palatial Tradition

The Early Modern era was a time known for spectacular palace architecture. Europeanists often think of Louis XIV's magnificent palace at Versailles, while the Islamic world boasts such sites as the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, the Mughal Red Fort in Delhi, and the Safavid Palace of Isfahan. These buildings were constructed to support attempts by early modern monarchs to gain unrivaled political power over their realms and to stake their claim for greatness in comparison with other rulers. Scholars have produced extensive studies of such monuments, analyzing their physical layout and symbolic significance.[2] One of the most important findings of this research has been to identify a distinctive historical tradition of palace architecture within the Islamic world.

The creation of Islamic palaces dates back to the time of the original Umayyad dynasty in the Mashriq, when the caliphs erected pleasure palaces in the Syrian desert. Located far from the main population centers, the original purpose of these palaces seems to have been to

provide the caliphs and their retinues with a place to enjoy some earthly pleasures associated with their great wealth, away from the watchful eyes of more pious Muslims.[3] By the ninth century A.D., however, Islamic palaces began to take on more symbolic meanings. With the construction of the ‘Abbāsid palaces in Baghdād and later in Sāmarrā (such as Jawsaq al-Khaqani and Balkuwara), we see the beginning of the practice of establishing new palace cities whose glories were consonant with the expansive claims of monarchs aspiring to rule global empires.[4] (Figure 1)

During the tenth century, rival caliphates in Cairo and Córdoba challenged ‘Abbāsid claims to leadership of the Islamic world and sought to substantiate their own claims by constructing impressive palace cities.[5] Like the ‘Abbāsids, the Spanish Umayyads created a new crown city, Madīnat al-Zahrā’, within the environs of the historic capital of Córdoba. (Figure 2) “The creation of a new capital from the ground up,” writes Janina Safran,” had become one of the insignia of caliphal rule.”[6] An entire business community and luxurious gardens surrounded the new city. At the same time, numerous additions were made to the Great Mosque of Córdoba in order to demonstrate the dynasty’s commitment to promoting religion. A few decades later, the establishment of Cairo as the new center of the Fāṭimid state immediately set that dynasty apart from their predecessors in Egypt. Just as the Umayyad caliphs had attempted to connect their new royal city with the old city of Córdoba, so the Fāṭimids sought to intertwine Cairo with the original Islamic capital of Fusṭāṭ. Prolific inscriptions proclaimed the centrality and power of the caliph to those who visited his monuments.[7]

The fact that al-Andalus was located at the far northwestern corner of the Islamic world does not mean that the ambitions of the Andalusian Umayyads were limited to regional glory. Indeed, Madīnat al-Zahrā’ was built at the height of Umayyad power by a sultan who claimed the universal caliphate for himself, and it would set a new standard for palatial architecture in western Islam. This standard continued to be imitated throughout al-Andalus and the Maghrib for centuries following the demolition of Madīnat al-Zahrā’ in 1010.[8] Recent excavations at the site of its former location have uncovered ruins which, when combined with extant descriptions of the palace, shed

some light onto the physical layout and iconographic meanings of this massive structure. (Figure 3)

The most famous royal monument built in the palatial tradition of Madīnat al-Zahrā' is the Alhambra of Granada, which was constructed during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[9] (Figures 4-7) Ironically, the Naṣrid dynasty that built the Alhambra was a besieged principality that represented the only remaining outpost of Islamic civilization on the Iberian Peninsula between the mid-thirteenth century and its fall in 1492.[10] Facing hostile Christian states to the north and west, and needing to fend off the designs of competing Muslim monarchs in the Maghrib, the Naṣrids nevertheless built a fairly prosperous state that supported the construction of an elaborate palace. Still, the dynasty seems to have been rather inwardly focused and was frequently divided by internal power struggles.[11] This reality is reflected in the fact that very little is known about the actual activities that went on within the walls of the Alhambra.[12]

A major difficulty confronting historians studying the tradition of palace building in the Islamic world is that very few such structures remain standing, and none of these predates the fourteenth century. Unlike religious buildings such as mosques or shrines, later monarchs did not feel constrained to respect the palaces built by their predecessors. Many of these mansions were dismantled by subsequent sultans who used the pirated materials for their own building projects. In other cases, capital cities were ransacked at the fall of dynasties and their palaces were pillaged by looters. This was the fate of the 'Abbāsid palaces in Baghdād and Sāmarrā, along with the Umayyad Madīnat al-Zahrā'.[13]

Yet, in a tremendous example of historical irony, the Alhambra was preserved by the Christian monarchs who had warred against Granada and finally subdued it in 1492. Thus it remains the oldest pre-modern Islamic palace to reach the modern era largely intact. Identified as a remnant within Christian Europe from a lost and exotic Islamic culture, the Alhambra fueled the imagination of many an Orientalist writer who wished to expound on the mysteries of oriental civilization.[14] Because of its distinctive history, the Alhambra has been viewed as a unique monument, unrivaled in the elegance, grace, and ornamental splendor found within its walls.

Recent scholarship has shown that the Alhambra should more accurately be understood within the context of the palatial tradition from which it arose. In fact, Oleg Grabar argues that there is little that is extraordinary about the Alhambra beyond the fact that it somehow managed to survive the ravages of time. "There is something poignant," writes Grabar, "in the thought that a ruler from a secondary dynasty in the collapsing Muslim culture of Spain should have created a monument so infused with literary and symbolic memories as the Alhambra and that this monument survived, while the masterpieces that in reality or in imagination served as its models are all gone."[15] In the same way, D. Fairchild Ruggles contrasts "the formative phase" of Andalusian palace architecture represented by Madīnat al-Zahrā' with "the . . . complete picture of what a medieval Islamic garden palace was like" found in the Alhambra.[16]

Although the Andalusian Umayyad and Naṣrid examples served as the primary inspiration for al-Badī', we cannot rule out potential influences from the most powerful contemporary Islamic state, the Ottoman Empire. The Sa'dīs disputed Ottoman claims to primacy in the Islamic world, stating that their sharīfian identity made the Moroccan dynasty better suited for the Islamic caliphate. Yet, despite these tensions, there are also indications that Sa'dī rulers adopted many Ottoman practices.[17] The possibility of Ottoman influence is increased when one considers that Mawlāy Aḥmad may have visited the palace in Istanbul during the reign of the Sa'dī sultan 'Abd Allāh al-Ghālib, when Aḥmad and his brother 'Abd al-Malik were refugees from Morocco.[18]

In addition to the fact that the Topkapı palace, like the Alhambra, is still standing, quite a bit of information remains about its construction and use (Figure 8). Much of this is analyzed in a major work by Gülru Necipoğlu entitled *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*.[19] Necipoğlu sketches the palace's history from its fifteenth-century construction by the sultan Mehmed II (the Conqueror) through its final abandonment in favor of the Dolmabahçe Palace four hundred years later. She focuses particularly upon the symbolic meanings of the elaborate court ceremonies attached to the palace and how they changed over time as the sultan became more and more isolated from the daily

workings of government, a direct result of his portrayal as a semi-divine figure.[20]

Thus, a substantial palace tradition existed within the Islamic world by 1578, when al-Manṣūr began to build his own royal monument. The construction of al-Badīʿ must be understood within this historical context.

al-Badīʿ in the Historical Sources

Aḥmad al-Manṣūr was clearly influenced by his predecessors, and he implemented many of their practices while adapting them to his own circumstances. This was certainly the case in his construction of a monumental palace within his capital city. Though it is often overlooked in studies of Islamic royal architecture, eyewitness accounts indicate that al-Badīʿ deserves to be considered among the famous palaces discussed above.

Al-Manṣūr was the greatest sultan of the Saʿdī dynasty and he ruled Morocco from 1578 to 1603. His reign is frequently remembered as a golden age in Moroccan history. Mawlāy Aḥmad is best known for attempting to extend his authority through a bold invasion, across the Sahara desert, of the Muslim West African Songhay Empire. However, his most lasting influence came from the development of a political doctrine that continues to justify royal authority in Morocco to the present day. This doctrine was presented through panegyric poetry and literary works, elaborate court ceremonies, and a powerful military. It asserted al-Manṣūr's claim to the universal caliphate over the Islamic world and was based upon his identity as a lineal descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad. The sultan's propaganda particularly emphasized his superior qualifications for the caliphate vis-à-vis his more powerful rivals in Istanbul, the Ottoman sultans.

The construction of al-Badīʿ was a monumental undertaking intended to promote these expansive claims. Begun in 1578, the palace was not finished until 1594, after the influx of West African gold obtained from the sultan's 1591 conquest of Songhay provided the resources for its completion. In fact, evidence suggests that al-Manṣūr was never fully satisfied with the palace and he continued to add to it

up to his death in 1603.[21] Thus, the creation of al-Badīʻ represents the one project to which Mawlāy Aḥmad consistently devoted himself throughout the duration of his reign.

Al-Ifrānī states that al-Manṣūr spared no expense in constructing al-Badīʻ. For this project, the sultan "brought workers from all of the countries, even from Europe."[22] He imported marble from Italy, which al-Ifrānī insists was paid for with sugar, "pound for pound."[23] Lime was carried from Timbuktu, "part of the contribution among the massive charges imposed upon the people."[24] The palace was built in the form of a large rectangle measuring 135 x 110 meters, with a huge courtyard in the center. The courtyard contained a long reflecting pool measuring 90 x 20 meters and four rectangular sunken gardens, each measuring 30 x 10 meters. Around the courtyard faced several pavilions (two measuring 15m x 16m and two measuring 23m x 15m) used for receiving guests. (Figures 9-10) Al-Badīʻ made a striking appearance, which is only partially recaptured in the following description from al-Ifrānī:

> One encountered onyx of all colors there, and marble as white as silver or entirely black. The cornices of the columns were covered in blended gold and leaves of fine gold. The floors were paved with superb slabs of polished and finely cut marble, and the walls were covered with earthenware of various colors, simulating the interweaving of flowers or embroidery upon a coat. Finally, the ceilings were inscribed with gold, and the walls, decorated in the same metal, were adorned with brilliant sculptures and elegant inscriptions, written in fine stucco. Having finished the decoration, the Sultan circulated the most pure water throughout the palace. By all accounts, al-Badīʻ was one of the highest and most splendid of monuments to have existed, surpassing the beauty of the palace in Baghdād. It was a sort of terrestrial paradise, a marvel of the world, packed with art, so that (observers) swooned with pleasure and admiration.[25]

An extensive contemporary account of al-Badīʻ's construction appears in the pages of *Manāhil al-ṣafā fī ma'āthir mawālīnā al-shurafā'*[26]. Composed by the sultan's chief scribe, ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz al-Fishātlī, *Manāḥil al-ṣafā* is an official history that heaps praises upon the dynasty of Aḥmad al-Manṣūr. Al-Fishtālī uses the finest courtly rhetoric to make his case in support of al-Manṣūr's claim to the uni-

versal caliphate. Thus, it should not surprise us to find that the scribe waxes eloquent in describing the marvels of al-Badīʿ.[27] In detailing the palace's magnificent qualities, al-Fishtālī repeatedly mentions that his pen cannot adequately recount the excellencies of this wondrous structure.

Throughout the pages of *Manāhil al-ṣafā*, al-Fishtālī constantly compares al-Manṣūr's achievements to those of other sultans, always drawing the conclusion that Mawlāy Aḥmad surpassed the accomplishments of his predecessors. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the scribe's description of the palace. Mawlāy Aḥmad saw the construction of impressive monuments as a true mark of greatness, and he expressed to al-Fishtālī his desire to build a palace that exceeded the excellent qualities of those constructed by other rulers. Al-Fishtālī's section on al-Badīʿ seeks to demonstrate al-Manṣūr's success in achieving this goal.

The quality of al-Badīʿ surpassed that of Marīnid and Almohad palaces, the scribe says, because unlike those dynasties al-Manṣūr did not tear down other monuments in order to build his own. He also accepted only the finest building materials, sending his emissaries as far away as Italy to obtain marble of the highest excellence. The scribe states that the magnificence of al-Badīʿ "causes one to forget the constructions of the Banū ʿAbbās in Baghdād, the Banū Marwān (Umayyads) in Syria, and the Banū ʿUbayd (Fāṭimids) in Cairo."[28] Even the achievements of the pharaohs would bow down before al-Manṣūr.[29]

Among the great qualities of this palace, al-Fishtālī lists the following: extensive use of the finest marble, running water that circulated throughout the structure splashing forth in multiple fountains and reflecting pools and servicing every room, beautiful pavilions where the sultan received his guests, rich gardens that reminded visitors of the gardens of paradise, an efficient organization which included extensive underground passageways that allowed servants to carry out their duties without interruption, grand vistas that looked out over the Moroccan capital, and special arrangements for female servants and members of the sultan's harem that allowed them to move about the palace while maintaining modest seclusion from the eyes of men.

Above all, al-Badī‘'s greatness is seen in the massive size of the structure. Al-Fishtālī states, for example, that it took 700 loads of wood to build the Khamsinia Pavilion and that al-Badī‘ included 500 marble pillars throughout the building. The scribe asserts that al-Manṣūr recruited the best workmen, bringing in experts from many different countries to achieve his goal.[30] He praises the architectural engineering, marveling at the size of the Khamsinia's dome, which stood "without support except by divine strength."[31] This dome was so magnificent, asserts al-Fishtālī, it was as if it were built by "the angel of the *mi'rāj*."[32]

Al-Fishatli's extravagant praise for al-Badī‘ is echoed in the writings of another contemporary writer, the ambassador Abū al-Ḥassān 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Tamagrūtī, whom the sultan commissioned to represent him at the Ottoman court in Istanbul during a diplomatic visit in 1589. Upon returning to Marrakesh, al-Tamagrūtī witnessed the sultan's celebration of the *mawlid* (the Prophet Muḥammad's birthday), which was held in the Badī‘ palace. Al-Tamagrūtī writes:

> Al-Manṣūr invited the people to come into his fortunate and marvelous palace, where the beautiful appearance recalls the radiance of the countenance of this prince . . . into the vast court among wondrous embellishments of a most pure style. This palace . . . is covered with silk fabrics of various colors. The platforms are arranged with an ability of which I have never seen the equal in any residence. They have been covered with cushions more magnificent than those of Khawarnaq and of Sedir. The curtains, the hangings, the tapestries are embroidered with gold . . . . On the length of the walls are stretched silk hangings covered with various designs of great originality and all wonderfully made . . . . They bear witness to an expertise the likes of which the preceding centuries have never known . . . . The sides of the pavilion rest upon columns of lined marble, where the cornices are covered with melted gold. The ground is paved with tiles of white marble of admirable workmanship and the joints are artistically stained in black. The interior of the pavilion is ornamented with patterns that are usually highlighted in gold; patterns so beautiful, so admirable, presented with an incredible artistry and which charm the eyes.[33]

But it was not just al-Manṣūr's court officials who praised the glories of al-Badī‘. A contemporary North African writer, Aḥmad al-

Maqqarī, showered high praise upon the palace after visiting Marrakesh in 1600. He lists al-Badī‘ among the sultan's great works, saying that there was none like it in the east or the west and that it was so filled with wonders that it was impossible to describe them all.[34] Al-Maqqarī includes several panegyric poems praising the sultan for his construction of the palace, including odes by Abī Malak Sidī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Ḥasāni, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Fishtālī, and the aforementioned ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Fishtālī, the sultan's chief scribe.[35]

Europeans also noted the impressive qualities of al-Manṣūr's royal reception hall. In *Crónica de Almançor*, written by the Portuguese notable António de Saldanha, there are many references to the Sa‘dī palace. António was son of the Portuguese governor of Tangier, Aires de Saldanha. Captured in battle during October 1592, António was taken to Marrakesh, where he remained a prisoner for fourteen years, despite his father's numerous attempts to obtain his release. Saldanha's situation was not as bleak as one might expect, however, for he was held under quite favorable conditions. Because of his high status, al-Manṣūr allowed António a considerable degree of liberty during his captivity. He "was free to come and go, had servants, could speak with whomever he wished, received regular mail (completely confidential), could borrow and lend money, and thus he was a beneficiary of vast privileges in his everyday life."[36] Saldanha took advantage of this freedom to develop relationships with some of the most powerful men in al-Manṣūr's court, as well as with the city's numerous European residents.[37] As a result, he was privy to information about the sultan and his activities from very well informed sources.

Like other observers, António de Saldanha was impressed with the sultan's building projects. His portrayals of al-Badī‘ are almost as eloquent as those of al-Fishtālī, albeit somewhat shorter. Saldanha considered the construction of the great mosque at the entrance to the palace, Riyāḍ al-Zaytūn, to be a tremendous project, while the palace baths were "thought to be among the most excellent in the world."[38] In describing al-Manṣūr's wealth, Saldanha writes "the sharīf deposited more than two million ounces of silver into his treasury every year, plus many pearls, minted gold, and precious stones."[39] He speaks of the sultan's fantastic harem, which provided "lodgings for a thousand women, among them a large number of Christians."[40] At the

height of the palace's construction, Saldanha relates, "he sent to search everywhere for craftsmen who were the most accomplished in their trades," setting up workshops for them in the palace and paying them so well that "the greatest masters came to present themselves to him."[41] The chronicler also depicts some of the great celebrations that the sultan hosted in the palace. After al-Manṣūr put down the rebellion of his nephew al-Nāṣir in 1596, Saldanha describes the festivities held at al-Badīʿ in the following manner: "The sharīf hosted celebrations of unaccustomed splendor. . . . He offered large banquets for all of his *qāʿid*s and he gave to each a brocaded tunic . . . . He ordered . . fires of joy and musical instruments that did not allow anyone to sleep for three nights."[42]

Of all the palace's outstanding qualities, Saldanha seems to have been most impressed with the palace gardens. In one place, he writes:

> (Al-Manṣūr) built the most grandiose palace that one could imagine, in front of which he placed a garden . . . of more than a league in circumference. There he dug out a small lake . . . (and) a fishpond in which there was such a large quantity of fish that it was incredible . . . . It entered into a river that was called the River of the King because, from the Atlas Mountains situated five leagues from there, the sultan had brought his water which, of excellent quality, flowed in such abundance that (the lake) filled up in two days. This water was (also) used to irrigate the garden because all the ground in the region of Marrakesh remains sterile if one does not bring water to it. And the sharīf planted all types of trees . . . (bearing) fruits that . . . are excellent but which would be impossible to send to Spain because they spoil when crossing the sea. There are still in this garden a large quantity . . . of vines and many olive trees (which) the captives look after for him . . . . The sharīf Aḥmad has established a pharmacy where there is every type of liquid product . . . such as a large quantity of fruit juices . . . that help to constitute remedies (as well as drinks) that charm the taste.[43]

Saldanha describes al-Manṣūr as being almost obsessive in his determination to add to the glory of his opulent palace, and his chronicle reflects the passion that the sultan demonstrated for al-Badīʿ. For example, the Portuguese nobleman writes the following lines in explaining the reason that it took so long for Mawlāy Aḥmad to respond to the clear abuses of his heir apparent as governor of Fez from 1597-

1602: "Every day complaints were brought to the sharīf from those who requested that he come to see what was taking place in Fez. However, he loved al-Badī‘ so much, that is to say his palace and his gardens, that he was incapable of leaving it."[44]

After the death of al-Manṣūr, the palace continued to stand for more than a hundred years even as Morocco descended into a lengthy civil war. During this period, a number of Europeans visited the palace, and left records of their observations. Despite the Sa‘dī decline, al-Badī‘ continued to impress. Some of the best descriptions of the palace from this period come from Spanish priests who spent extensive time in Marrakesh working to obtain the release of Christian captives taken in corsair raids on Spanish ships. In 1708, the Spanish friar P. Francisco de San Juan del Puerto published an account of his time in the Sa‘dī capital.[45] His text includes excerpts from the writings of earlier missionaries in Morocco. One of these, P. Matias de San Francisco, visited al-Badī‘ in the late 1630s during the reign of the Sa‘dī sultan al-Walīd.[46] His account praises the palace in words similar to those of al-Manṣūr's court panegyrists, highlighting the sumptuous mosaics, arabesques, gardens, pavilions, fountains, and the extensive use of gold, marble, and alabaster found throughout the structure.

In 1641, the Dutch artist Adriaen Matham visited Marrakesh and wrote a poetic ode whose language seems, in places, to equal that of al-Fishtālī. For example:

> Your magnificent palace surpasses
> in splendor and in sumptuousness all the royal courts!
> Your orchard of Meserra is richly planted
> With agreeable trees of one type or another,
> Of oranges, of lemons, and other fruit without count,
> Of olives and dates; it is a garden filled with delicacies.
> One finds there the most pure water that one has ever seen
> And all the embellishments it is possible to have in this world.
> It is deplorable that the eyes of barbarians
> And not those of Christians always witness this spectacle.
> But everything that man constructs will collapse,
> Struck by death, trampled by feet and miserably wounded,
> According to what is predicted for all kingdoms.

> No other royal palace can ever compare with you,
> Nevertheless, O city, you will one day be totally destroyed
> And you will resemble a field for sheep.[47]

From our vantage point in the early twenty-first century, Matham's poem seems especially prophetic in reference to al-Badīʻ (Figures 10-18). And yet, even though we are forced to use our imaginations to reconstruct the overwhelming impression that the palace must have made upon its contemporaries, there is one part of al-Manṣūr's Dār al-Makhzan that escaped the ravages of Mawlāy Ismāʻīl's depravations. Even as he built a magnificent palace to house his regime, Aḥmad al-Manṣūr also constructed an ornate garden tomb in which to house the remains of his ancestors. Ibn al-Qāḍī informs us that the sultan regularly led prayers and received petitions from his subjects in front of the gravestone of his father, Muḥammad al-Shaykh, giving the impression that al-Manṣūr sought to establish the Saʻdī tombs as a spiritually significant site, perhaps in competition with the tomb of Idrīs II in Fez.[48] The inscription upon al-Shaykh's tombstone, commissioned by al-Manṣūr and written by al-Fishtālī, adds to this impression. It refers to the former Saʻdī sultan in saintly language emphasizing his sanctity and glorious deeds in honor of God, and al-Manṣūr's mother is also described as a saint on her tombstone.[49] The strong religious imagery of this site seems directed towards portraying the Saʻdīs as a holy lineage rather than as simple political leaders.

Respect for the dead prevented Mawlāy Ismāʻīl from destroying the Saʻdī tombs even though he sealed them off from public access. Rediscovered in the early twentieth century, the Saʻdī tombs are embellished with the same exquisite decorative qualities that must surely have also graced the palace itself. In addition to providing the one extant example of Mawlāy Aḥmad's architectural design for his palace complex, the garden tomb confirms the stylistic similarities between al-Badīʻ and the Alhambra.[50] (Figures 19-22)

Along with the garden tomb, the descriptions found in eyewitness accounts demonstrate certain parallels that al-Badīʻ had with the Andalusian palaces. For instance, al-Fishtālī mentions fountains formed in the shape of lions, a motif repeatedly found in the Alhambra. In the same way, he references poetry inscribed on the palace walls (also in

the Alhambra) and spectacular views encountered at key locations throughout the building. (Figures 10-18) This latter element echoes the emphasis upon vistas that characterizes both Madīnat al-Zahrā' and the Alhambra, as pointed out by D. Fairchild Ruggles.[51] The importance placed upon water, gardens, and multiple pavilions is likewise reminiscent of the architectural effects of the Andalusian palaces. Yet al-Fishtālī asserts that al-Badī' presented many innovations, including its use of multiple levels within the pavilions and its complex circulation system that provided hot water to heat the baths of the *ḥamām* and cold water for the fountains.

In the same way, these accounts illuminate some areas in which al-Badī' may reflect Ottoman influences. For example, the royal ceremonies performed within its walls emphasized the sultan's sanctity and his military prowess, much as similar ceremonies were regularly carried out at the Topkapı Palace. Also, the layout of al-Badī' may have been inspired by the Ottoman preference for grand courtyards that highlighted the sultan's power. Necipoğlu's analysis of the Topkapı focuses upon the system of three courts used in that structure. She argues that the inner court was reserved for the sultan's private use, while the middle court housed administrative functions and ceremonies performed before a select audience of local elite and foreign dignitaries. In contrast, the outer court was used for large public ceremonies, in which the aim was to awe and impress visitors by their sheer magnitude.

Although the Sa'dī sultans never achieved the degree of isolation and administrative complexity practiced by the Ottomans, some comparisons of the palaces can be made. Al-Badī', as the reception palace, would correspond with the outer court in the Topkapı Palace. In the same way, the sultan's private quarters and those of his harem, housed in adjoining buildings within the more highly restricted Dār al-Makhzan, can be seen to correspond with the inner court at Topkapı. Various administrative buildings and service facilities were attached to al-Badī', such as the royal mint, the armory, and the sultan's stables. Their functions paralleled activities in the outer and middle courts of the palace at Istanbul.[52] (Figure 23) Due to the constraints of its location in the heart of the old *qaṣba*, Mawlāy Aḥmad's palace complex presented a more jumbled appearance than the compara-

tively orderly layout of the Topkapı Palace. However, its essential functions were quite similar.[53]

The Symbolic Meaning of al-Badī‘

Significant financial and physical resources were required to produce palaces such as al-Badī‘ and it seems clear that monarchs paid such high prices at least partially because of the symbolic messages that these structures communicated to a specific audience. It is not always easy for historians to understand the full range of symbolism intended in such monuments. This is a problem for scholars who study the Alhambra, as Oleg Grabar admits when he states that historians still have very little idea as to what sorts of ceremonies took place in the Naṣrid palace.[54] In contrast, we have seen some of the extensive eyewitness testimony that elaborates upon the uses of al-Badī‘. What can we learn from this testimony about the symbolic meanings of Mawlāy Aḥmad's palace?

The palace served an important function as a site for celebrating holidays and festivals, such as the *mawlid*. This festival was particularly important to the Sa‘dīs, given the dynasty's dependence upon sharīfian claims to justify its rule. The fact that four contemporary authors describe the *mawlid* ceremony in great detail confirms that the sultan placed great emphasis upon it. Al-Fishtālī provides an elaborate description of Mawlāy Aḥmad's celebration of the *mawlid*, including a striking candlelit ceremony and poetry competitions that took place in the palace courtyard. Al-Maqqarī and al-Tamagrūtī also confirm that al-Badī‘ was the site for the *mawlid* celebrations held during their visits to Marrakesh.[55] The ceremony that al-Tamagrūtī describes took place in 1589, or five years before the official completion of the palace. Evidently al-Badī‘ was sufficiently impressive even before its grand opening.

Not only did al-Manṣūr require his top officials to attend the *mawlid* celebrations, but he also seems to have opened the palace to the people of Marrakesh as well. At the ceremony, Mawlāy Aḥmad presented himself before his subjects as the divinely appointed caliph and successor to his ancestor, the Prophet Muḥammad, whose birth-

day he honored in an elaborate and glorious fashion. Symbolic elements such as the sultan's white robes, extensive use of candles and panegyric poetry, a sumptuous repast provided by caliphal generosity, and Mawlāy Aḥmad's expressions of pious devotion, all brought together in the most imposing of surroundings, served to reinforce Sa'dī dynastic legitimacy before the eyes of the sultan's subjects.[56] Additional examples of palatial gatherings include al-Ifrānī's description, mentioned above, of a grand inaugural party held at al-Badī' in 1594. Other sources recount numerous meetings and receptions that took place in the palace.[57] The sources also assert that al-Manṣūr regularly received visitors, heard pleas for justice from his subjects, and held council meetings within the palace environs.[58]

It is clear that one of the main functions for al-Badī' was the reception of dignitaries. Numerous accounts demonstrate that Mawlāy Aḥmad and his top officials regularly met with European representatives at his capital in Marrakesh. In fact, excavations at the palace site have uncovered several small guest rooms, each built around a miniature square with a fountain and which connect to the main palace courtyard through a hall and stairwell. There is no doubt that one of the reasons for al-Badī''s opulence was to impress the foreign notables who stayed in these rooms with the greatness of the Sa'dī sultan.[59]

An important source of insight into the palace's symbolic meaning can be seen in the panegyric poems inscribed upon the walls and doors throughout al-Badī', which were written by al-Fishtālī and other court poets. This use of inscriptions mirrors the practice of the Alhambra, where poetic excerpts elaborating upon the iconographic meaning of the palace can be found in almost every room.[60] Poetic inscriptions seem to have served a similar function in al-Badī'. Interestingly, the poems primarily emphasize the sultan's military prowess, while advancing claims regarding his caliphal identity. They describe the palace as evidence of the glory of al-Manṣūr's reign and of the extent of his influence. It is compared favorably with other famous buildings from his own time and before. The poems assert that there is no other palace like al-Badī', just as there is no other sultan like al-Manṣūr. In one poem, al-Fishtālī compares the palace to para-

dise, referencing the Qur'ān in stating that "al-Badī' of al-Manṣūr is a garden of delights."[61]

A sample of al-Fishtālī's poetry on the walls of al-Badī' reads as follows:

> The fulfillment of my glory, he is the author of this construction, who is the honor and the guide for humanity, al-Manṣūr.
>
> The prince who, during his reign, was elevated above the stars, Castor and Pollux . . . .
>
> Who strikes fear, even to the far side of Iraq. . . .
>
> He is an ocean of generosity, but one who stirs his waves; he is a glorious two-edged sword, but one who is prolific.
>
> He is a mountain that one supports and venerates without sorrow, and who, on the day of combat, sends numerous armies. . . .
>
> Victory made an alliance with him and, morning or night, it will reach him as happy news.[62]

The extravagant claims in this poem, such as the one about al-Manṣūr casting fear even unto Iraq, although patently untrue, demonstrate that this was a sovereign who was not content with being known as simply another king of Morocco. In another part of the poem, al-Fishtālī states that the sultan's banners "receive the vanguard of Jesus Christ," an allusion which suggests a Mahdist claim.[63] The reference to Christ, who many Muslims believe is due to return to earth before the end of the world, could imply that the sultan who welcomes his vanguard (al-Manṣūr) is himself the Mahdī.

Indeed, when one considers the implications of his actions, it is easy to conclude that al-Manṣūr may have been making even bolder claims through his construction of the palace than a literal reading of his words might indicate. Some scholars argue that he also implied Mahdist claims through other uses of symbolism and imagery. For instance, John Ralph Willis postulates that al-Manṣūr may have increased his use of Mahdist imagery during the years immediately pre-

ceding and following the turn of the Islamic millennium (1591 A.D.), thus drawing upon widely-held beliefs that the Mahdī would return at the end of the first thousand years of Islamic rule.[64] Willis writes:

> Aḥmad al-Manṣūr sought by word and deed to identify his authority with that of the Imām al-Mahdī. . . . (His) plans for a kind of Muslim 'Crystal Palace' (called al-Badīʿ, 'the Marvelous'), formed the most dazzling feature of his imperial design. And, as we have recognized, Mahdist expectations anticipatory of the year 1000 (1591), and linked to the constellation of al-Manṣūr, make al-Badīʿ more than a construction christened by chance, but part of a conscious policy to crown this event with an appropriate climax.[65]

Whether or not al-Manṣūr implied a Mahdist identity through the construction of al-Badīʿ is debatable. The biggest drawback to this theory is the fact that the primary sources rarely make this claim explicitly. However, there is no doubt that Mawlāy Aḥmad portrayed himself as the one rightful caliph over the Islamic world and asserted that all Muslims owed submission to his sharīfian caliphate. He even sought to advance these claims among Muslims of the Mashriq, who were ruled by the Ottoman Empire at that time. When the construction of al-Badīʿ is considered in light of the copious panegyric literature produced by his *dīwān*, the reports of his court ceremonies, and the presentation of the sultan in the poems inscribed upon the palace walls, there seems no doubt that this stunning reception hall was built as part of a strategy to advance al-Manṣūr's claim for leadership in the Muslim world.

al-Badīʿ and Hispano-Maghribī Palace Tradition

Although contemporary observers were impressed with al-Manṣūr's architectural achievements, later historians have not shared their opinion. In his monumental work on the history of Marrakesh, Gaston Deverdun asserts that Saʿdī architectural achievements were minimal compared with those of other dynasties, and lacking in originality, deriving most of their inspiration from Moriscos who had fled the Iberian peninsula after the fall of al-Andalus. Deverdun doesn't even believe that al-Manṣūr was the greatest builder of the Saʿdī dy-

nasty, reserving that acclaim for his older brother, ʻAbd Allāh al-Ghālib.[67] Although he acknowledges the tremendous impact of al-Badīʻ, Deverdun criticizes al-Manṣūr for choosing to build the palace within the framework of the old Almohad city of Marrakesh which, he points out, runs contrary to the actions of prior dynasties. "In fixing his new palace within the Almohad casbah," writes Deverdun, "al-Manṣūr did nothing more than continue a living and stifling past."[68]

Deverdun traces the general inspiration for the palace to al-Andalus, with its name derived from a pavilion in Madīnat al-Zahrā', and the architectural layout following the same pattern as the Alhambra. Many of the artisans and designers who worked on the palace were of foreign origin and, as noted, al-Badīʻ was frequently used to impress European visitors. In speaking of a "Saʻdī renaissance" in Morocco, Deverdun quotes M.G. Marcais, who wrote:

> It is good to point out that this renaissance was more a return to forms of art partly out of date or even archaic, than a renovation of style through the introduction of new elements . . . . In fact, the principle of this civilization came from Granada, which had fallen in 1492, and from the Moriscos and Jews chased from Spain during the sixteenth century. All that was in this capital, set off from the midst of its lands, of what was good and beautiful under the Saʻdīs, was owed to these immigrants.[69]

Deverdun's points are well taken, particularly when compared with great builders such as the Umayyads of al-Andalus or even the Marīnids of Morocco. As we have seen, there is no question that Saʻdī architecture draws heavily upon Andalusian themes. Indeed al-Badīʻ, and not the Alhambra, should be understood as the final culmination of the Hispano-Maghribī palace tradition that dates back to Madīnat al-Zahrā'.[70] Just as al-Andalus looked to the Mashriq for inspiration in developing its palatial style, so did Aḥmad al-Manṣūr imitate the glorious former caliphate of the west, both in his claims to universal rule and in the ceremonies and monuments he initiated to support these claims.

Still, Deverdun's assertion that the Saʻdīs did nothing but blindly copy their Andalusian predecessors goes too far. Deverdun himself clearly identifies one place in which al-Manṣūr did not follow the An-

dalusian example. Unlike many of his predecessors, Aḥmad al-Manṣūr did not create a new capital in which to place his stunning palace. Rather, he built it squarely in the heart of Marrakesh, the ancient capital of the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties, and then-current capital of the Sa‘dīs.

In fact there are other differences between al-Badī‘ and the Andalusian palaces. Though Deverdun asserts that al-Badī‘ is largely a copy of the Alhambra, a glance at the layouts of the two palaces reveals that al-Badī‘'s courtyard dwarfs those of the infamous Court of the Lions or Court of the Myrtles. (Figures 4, 9) As argued above, al-Badī‘ seems to have been more influenced in the scope of its size and grandeur by Madīnat al-Zahrā’ or by the Topkapı Palace. In this case, the latter makes more sense as a source of inspiration, since the Ottomans represented the caliphal competition for al-Manṣūr. It was important to show that they could not outdo him in palatial construction.

Another important difference between al-Badī‘ and the Alhambra, also discussed above, is the abundance of historical sources that provide insight into the uses and symbolic meaning of al-Manṣūr's palace. The stark contrast between the amount and quality of historical documentation for the two palaces points to a sharp distinction between their functions. The Alhambra was the creation of a retreating and inwardly-focused dynasty, the last remaining outpost of Islamic civilization in a peninsula rapidly being overrun by Christians. Al-Badī‘, on the other hand, was built by an ambitious sultan who was eager to display his glories to the outside world. Thus, the ceremonial function of al-Badī‘ was much more pronounced than that of the Alhambra, it was more carefully documented, and this documentation was more widely distributed.

But differences can also be seen between al-Badī‘ and the palaces of the Andalusian Umayyads and the Ottomans, two dynasties that did express a desire for expansive conquest. Although those two states developed palatial structures and royal ceremonies that enforced a physical separation between the sultan's court and his less privileged subjects, the court of al-Manṣūr does not appear to have consistently applied these practices. In fact, the exception can be used to prove the rule. Al-Ifrānī records a story in which al-Manṣūr received the famous West African scholar Aḥmad Baba from behind a

screen, imitating the practices of ʻAbbāsid and Ottoman caliphs. However, the scholar rebukes the sultan for pretending to be like God, after which al-Manṣūr rapidly comes down from behind the screen and talks to Baba face to face.[71] There are no further references in the sources to the sultan utilizing this approach.

Why did Mawlāy Aḥmad break with these traditions so firmly established by the dynasties he sought to compare himself with? Surely, it was not due to a lack of funds. Multiple sources point out the vast amounts of cash available to the sultan as a result of his military victories.[72] Had he wanted to build his palace in a separate location from his capital, perhaps in a site such as Tinmal, the original center of Almohad power, he could have done so. Nor did al-Manṣūr construct al-Badīʻ in the heart of Marrakesh out of compassion for and a desire to be available to his subjects. The sources provide too many other indications of al-Manṣūr's disregard for the rights of individuals and his disdain for the lower classes, particularly for rural Berber tribesmen.[73] It seems clear, in fact, that the sultan did consciously attempt to construct a psychological distance between himself and his subjects which was expressed through elaborate ceremonies that emphasized his pure sharīfian bloodlines and through the use of a high courtly form of Arabic known as *inshā'* in all of his official documents and communications.[74]

Al-Manṣūr's choice of a site for his palace seems due, rather, to the comparative newness of Saʻdī power and the requirements associated with governing a decentralized country like Morocco. By the time of his ascension to the throne, the Saʻdīs had only ruled over a united Morocco for less than twenty-five years. Rival claimants to the throne had disrupted the reigns of his father, Muḥammad al-Shaykh, and his older brother, ʻAbd al-Mālik. In fact, al-Manṣūr's official historians, al-Fishtālī and Ibn al-Qāḍī, report numerous forays that the sultan or his generals had to take into the countryside to bring rebellious Berber and Arab tribes under control. While the Andalusian Umayyads and Fāṭimids could concentrate upon developing glorious capital cities, al-Manṣūr seemed concerned to initiate building projects throughout his realms, many of which served a military purpose, such as the two towers built upon the hills of the old city of Fez.[75] In Marrakesh, the sultan appears to have focused all of his attention

upon the construction of al-Badīʿ, leaving his mother to initiate other works of public interest.[76] The palace seems to have served the central function of projecting a carefully crafted image of the glorious sultan Aḥmad al-Manṣūr, and of solidifying his power base in the heart of his capital city.

End of the Golden Age

Thus Mawlāy Aḥmad may have had more practical reasons for his choice of location than the simple lack of originality that Deverdun attributes to him. Times had changed since the Almohad dynasty used caliphal and Mahdist claims to conquer North Africa and Islamic Spain in the twelfth century. Unlike earlier dynasties, al-Manṣūr had to contend with rising European powers that challenged the sovereignty of his state perhaps more seriously than did the distant Ottoman dynasty that he devoted so much energy to discredit. Imperial Spain threatened from across the Straits of Gibraltar, and the Saʿdī sultan had to deploy the most careful negotiating tactics to avoid yielding territory to the aggressive Habsburg monarch Philip II. For this reason, al-Manṣūr kept up a lively diplomatic correspondence both with Philip and his arch-rival, Elizabeth I of England, deftly playing the two off against one another while maintaining his independence over the course of two and a half decades.[77]

So it was that al-Manṣūr's magnificent palace, built according to standards established over centuries of Islamic palatial tradition, played host far more often to diplomats arriving from various European states than to Muslim ambassadors who could better appreciate the meanings of its architectural forms. These Europeans marveled at the great wealth that could make such a construction possible, but they could not read the poetry that graced its walls, recognize the historical referents to the great ʿAbbāsid and Umayyad palaces that had served as its inspiration, nor understand the Mahdist allusions of al-Manṣūr's court ceremonies.

Over and above their failure to understand the symbolic meanings of al-Badīʿ, al-Manṣūr's European visitors lived in a much different world than did the Saʿdī sultan. The great transformations taking

place in Europe had no equivalent in early modern Morocco. In architecture as in many other areas, Aḥmad al-Manṣūr seemed mostly intent upon reclaiming a lost glory from a bygone era, rather than creating a vision of a new world. Nowhere was this tendency more clearly displayed than in the sultan's promotion of his claims to the universal caliphate, an assertion that no Islamic leader had seriously sought to advance for some three hundred years prior to al-Manṣūr's time.[78] Rather than reorganize his state to compete more effectively with Europeans in the new world of the late sixteenth century, al-Manṣūr sought to revive the past caliphal glories of the Andalusian Umayyads and the ʻAbbāsids of Baghdād.

Towards the latter part of his reign, al-Manṣūr seems to have become more obsessed with reckless plans for new military triumphs. As late as 1596, al-Fishtālī still spoke of the imminent re-conquest of al-Andalus, seeming not to recognize the impossibility of such a venture.[79] In correspondence with Queen Elizabeth in 1601, al-Manṣūr proposed an alliance between their two countries to attack Spanish possessions as far away as the Indies; clearly an unrealistic proposal, given Morocco's lack of a substantial navy.[80] While European merchants were creating a new worldwide economy with themselves at the center, al-Manṣūr's propaganda discussed the superiority of his claims to the historic caliphate over those of the Ottomans, and his emissaries sought allies in Ottoman Cairo and Medina to support these claims. At a critical juncture in world history, the Saʻdī leadership of Morocco was trying to recreate conditions that had led to the success of Islamic dynasties several hundred years before their own.

It is even possible that the sultan was preparing a grand stage upon which he intended to make explicit the Mahdist claims that he had only made implicitly to that point. We may never know whether this was the case, however, because events turned against al-Manṣūr shortly after he unveiled al-Badīʻ in 1594. Two years later, Morocco was hit by the first of a series of plagues and natural disasters that weighed the country down during the last seven years of al-Manṣūr's reign and drained the Saʻdī dynasty of its vitality. During these same years, al-Manṣūr's authority was challenged by two dangerous rebellions: the first in 1595-1596 by his nephew, al-Nāṣir, and the second in 1602 by his son and heir apparent, Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-

Ma'mun. Before the country could recover from these disruptions, al-Manṣūr died—a victim of the plague in 1603. His sons, rather than consolidating his legacy, tore the country and the Sa'dī dynasty apart as they fought among themselves for control of Morocco. The last Moroccan golden age had come to an end.

Conclusions

It is in this light that we need to understand the creation of al-Badī'. Although a near contemporary of the great European palaces of the Age of Absolutism, it possessed a different historical lineage and expressed very different symbolic meanings. While demonstrating a number of similarities to earlier Islamic palaces, al-Badī' was not just an uninspired imitation of the Alhambra. It is more accurate to view it as continuing a long tradition, a late attempt to recapture an era that could never be reclaimed.[81] While it utilized many architectural styles and artistic forms that were similar to those of its predecessors, al-Badī' applied these styles in ways that were appropriate to its own setting and were subservient to the agenda of the monarch that constructed it.

Ironically, al-Manṣūr's palace utilized the same stylistic designs that inspired Christian Spanish kings, ignorant of Islamic palatial tradition, to preserve the Alhambra intact.[82] However, a later Moroccan sultan who did understand the symbolic meanings of al-Badī' decided to destroy it as a threat to his own glory. Thus, the one stands as a monument to a great era of Islamic palace architecture while the other is forgotten outside of Morocco. The besieged, inconsequential Naṣrid dynasty built the timeless memorial, the Alhambra, while al-Manṣūr, who sought to challenge the world-conquering Ottomans, is accused of producing only tired and stale imitations of the past. As al-Ifrānī so poignantly writes, when considering the transitory nature of human accomplishment, "duration, eternity, and absolute power belong (only) to God."[83]

Today, the Badī' palace sits in ruins, just as the holy man prophesied to al-Manṣūr in 1594. Regularly visited by tourists, it hosts a large festival sponsored by the Moroccan Cultural Ministry each sum-

mer. But mostly it is a habitation for storks. (Figure 24) Still, neither this current reality nor the dismissive attitude shown by modern historians towards Sa'dī architecture should cause us to deafen our ears to the voices of many eyewitnesses who tell us a different story about al-Badī'. It is time for historians of Islamic architecture to re-examine the Moroccan palace that so many seem to have forgotten.

NOTES

1. Muḥammad al-Saghīr al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī bi-akhbār mulūk al-qarn al-ḥādī*, ed. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Shādilī (Casablanca: Maṭba'a al-Najāḥ al-Jadīda, 1998), 190.

2. For example, see Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001); George Mitchell, *The Royal Palaces of India* (Singapore: Thames and Hudson, 1994); D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991); Eugenio Galdieri, *Esfahan: 'Alī Qapu An Architectural Survey* (Rome: ISMEO, 1979); Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 2nd ed., rev. (Sebastopol, CA: Solipsist Press, 1992); Yves Porter and Arthur Thévenart, tr. David Radinowicz, *Palaces and Gardens of Persia* (Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 2003), among others.

3. This same sort of impulse can be witnessed today among Saudi royal princes, who often vacation in remote spots in Europe, America, or Asia in order to enjoy pleasures that would not be permissible within their own society.

4. Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, 87-100.

5. Paula Sanders and Janina Safran have written extensively on how these caliphates made use of symbolism in legitimizing their states. Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fāṭimid Cairo* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Janina M. Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate: The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in al-Andalus* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). See also Miguel Barceló, "The Manifest Caliph: Umayyad Ceremony in Córdoba, or the Staging of Power," *The Formation of al-Andalus, Part 1: History and Society*, ed. Manuela Marín, *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World* 46, gen. ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 425-55.

6. Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate,* 53.

7. However, there were some differences between the Umayyad and Fāṭimid use of monuments. Sanders' analysis of Fāṭimid symbolism focuses upon that dynasty's use of public ceremony and the development of a "ritual city" to support its legitimacy in Egypt, particularly important since Fāṭimid claims made in the name of the Ismā'īlī Shī'ī Imāms represented a clear break from prior dynasties. On the other hand, the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III seems to have emphasized continuity in constructing Madīnat al-Zahrā'. Safran points out that the Umayyads of al-Andalus "did not represent (their) caliphate as a radical break from the past," but instead emphasized that they were carrying on the legacy begun by the Umayyad caliphs of Damascus. Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate,* 60.

8. The court official Muḥammad ibn Abī Amīr (al-Manṣūr), who took power after the death of the Umayyad caliph al-Hakam, built his own palace city (Madīnat al-Ẓāhira) in 981. Other palaces were built in imitation of Madīnat al-Zahrā' by the so-called "party kings" in cities such as Murcia, Zaragoza, and Seville during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For a discussion of these palaces, see Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 442-57.

9. Robert Irwin points out that the Alhambra was a palatial city in its own right: "The walls of the Alhambra complex enclosed not one but perhaps as many as six palaces, a barracks, a congregational mosque, and a small town, as well as a zoo, an aviary, and industrial workshops . . . . The whole site occupies fourteen hectares and it has been estimated that it would accommodate 40, 000 people." Robert Irwin, *The Alhambra* (London: Profile Books, 2004), 21.

10. Oleg Grabar postulates that the fortress-like appearance of the Alhambra reflects this besieged condition, as well as its origins as a military structure. Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 78-79.

11. For more on the Naṣrids, see L.P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain 1250-1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Rachel Arié, *L'Espagne musulman au temps de Nasrides (1232-1492)* (Paris: Editions E. de Boccard, 1973).

12. Grabar, *The Alhmabra*, 20-21.

13. Oleg Grabar speculates that another reason for the short life spans of Islamic palaces could be that they were not always built with the best of materials or the most careful construction. He writes, "Many monuments, especially palaces, were built rapidly, either because insecurity of power made lengthy building programs unlikely to reach a conclusion or because they tended to be personal rather than dynastic and were not meant to or expected to survive their original patron." Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 139.

14. Modern writers praise the Alhambra with strings of superlatives and orientalist imagery. For example, Robert Irwin writes, "Many who have visited the buildings of the Alhambra judge them to be the most beautiful in the world" and "The Alhambra seems a place of enchantment." In addition, he quotes Washington Irving as saying "The whole edifice reminds one of the enchanted palace of an Arabian tale." Irwin, *The Alhambra*, 15, 69, 22. Miles Danby argues that the Alhambra served as the initial inspiration for an architectural style that was popular in the West during the nineteenth century, called "Moorish Style." Miles Danby, *Moorish Style* (London: Phaidon, 1995), 160, 162, 167-77.

15. Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 125.

16. Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, xiii.

17. See Abderrahmane El Moudden, "Sharīfs and Padishāhs: Moroccan—Ottoman Relations from the sixteenth through the eighteenth Centuries," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1992), 139-48. In contrast, Weston Cook sees Hispano-Maghribī military traditions as providing a more significant influence upon the Moroccan military than the Ottomans; Weston F. Cook, Jr., *The Hundred Years War for Morocco: Gunpowder and the Military Revolution in the Early Modern Muslim World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 232-35, 242-45, 256-65, 284-86. Likewise, Dahiru Yahya places Sa'dī imitation of Ottoman practices within the larger picture of Sa'dī attempts to maintain their independence from Ottoman control; Dahiru Yahya, *Morocco in the Sixteenth Century: Problems and Patterns in an African Foreign Policy* (Harlow: Longman, 1981), 68-72.

18. Mercedes García-Arenal believes that Mawlāy Aḥmad did indeed visit Istanbul with his brother 'Abd al-Malik during the reign of al-Ghālib. She also sees his construction of a family gravesite near the palace, which he clearly sought to turn into a sacred spot, as being influenced by the Fāṭimid tombs viewed in an assumed trip to Cairo during the same period. See García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdīs of the Muslim West*, trans. Martin Beagles (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006), 270, 277. The sources are divided on this point, however, with al-Fishtālī and Ibn al-Qāḍī silent on the question. While there is strong evidence that 'Abd al-Malik did make the trip to Istanbul, it is more debatable in the case of Aḥmad.

19. Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991).

20. Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 24-30.

21. António de Saldanha states that, as late as 1597, "the *sharīf* expanded his palace with many noble residences and he built baths there, for himself and his women, which are thought to be among the most excellent in the

world," in António Dias Farinha, ed. *Crónica de Almançor, Sultao de Marrocos (1578-1603) de António de Saldanha.* Estudo crítico, introduçao e notas por António Dias Farinha. Traduction Française par Leon Bourdon. (Lisbon: Institut de Investigaçao Científica Tropical, Lisbon, 1997), 282.

22. al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 180.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 181.

25. Ibid., 180-81.

26. Abū Fāris ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz al-Fishtālī, *Manāhil al-ṣafā fī ma'āthir mawālīnā al-shurafā'* ed. ʻAbd al-Karīm Kuriyyīm (Rabat, 1973).

27. Ibid., 252-63.

28. Ibid., 252.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 254.

31. Ibid., 256.

32. Ibid., 258.

33. ʻAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Tamagrūtī, *al-Nafḥa al-miskiyya fī al-sifāra al-Turkiyya,* ed. ʻAbd al-Laṭīf al-Shādilī (Rabāṭ: al-Maṭbaʻa al-Malikiyya, 2002), 142.

34. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Rawḍa al-as al-ʻāṭira al-anfās fī dhikr man laqītahu min ʻa'lām al-ḥaḍratīn Murākush wa-Fās* (Rabat: Maṭbaʻa al-Malikiyya, 1983), 26.

35. al-Maqqarī, *Rawḍa al-as*, 26-31, 134-39.

36. Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor,* XX, XXII.

37. For example, see Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor*, 282. Saldanha chronicles the activities of a large number of foreigners who spent time in Marrakesh, such as captives, merchants, diplomats, priests, etc., from a wide variety of European countries.

38. Ibid., 282.

39. Ibid., 86.

40. Ibid., 84.

41. Ibid., 142.

42. Ibid., 234.

43. Ibid., 80.

44. Ibid., 276.

45. Francisco de San Juan del Puerto, *Mission Historical de Marruecos* (Seville, 1708).

46. Matias de San Francisco, *Relacion del viage spiritual,* in del Puerto, *Mission Historical*, 368-69. For another seventeenth century account of al-Badīʻ, see "Relation de Thomas le Gendre (1665)," *Les sources inédites de*

l'histoire du Maroc de 1530 a 1845, Dynastie Saadienne, ed. Henry de Castries, et al, France, III (Paris: E. Leroux, 1927), 727. These accounts are discussed by Georges Aimel, "Le palais d'El Bedi' á Marrakech et le mausolée des chorfa Saadiens," *Les Archives Berbères* 25 (1918): 53-63.

47. Henry de Castries, "Le Palais d'El Bedi et L'Oeuvre de Matham," *Les sources inédites de l'histoire du Maroc*, Pays-Bas, IV (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1923), 579.

48. Aḥmad Ibn al-Qāḍī, *al-Muntaqā al-maqṣūr 'alā ma'āthir al-khalīfa Abī al-'Abbās al-Manṣūr*, ed. Muḥammad Razzouq (Rabāṭ: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1986), 353. This can also be seen in Ibn al-Qāḍī's inclusion of poetic excerpts from Muḥammad al-Shaykh's tomb in a chapter dedicated to demonstrating al-Manṣūr's devotion to saints and holy men. Ibn al-Qāḍī, *al-Muntaqā al-maqṣūr*, 389-90.

49. Gaston Deverdun, *Inscriptions arabes de Marrakech* (Rabāṭ: IHEM, Ed. Techn. Nord-Africaines, 1956), 82-86, 131-34.

50. For an analysis of the Sa'dī tombs, see Gaston Deverdun, *Marrakech, des origins a 1912*, 2 vols. (Rabāṭ: Editions Techniques Nord-Africaines, 1959), 1:402-12. One dominant architectural element seen in the Sa'dī tombs is an extensive use of *muqarnas* decorative technique, a favorite artistic component of the Alhambra. It seems likely that al-Badī' also used this popular style from the Hispano-Maghribī architectural repertoire.

51. Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision*, 100-109, 168-91.

52. For a detailed description of al-Manṣūr's palace and its dependencies, see Deverdun, *Marrakech, des origins à 1912*, 1:384-400; and P.H. Koehler, "La kasba Saadienne de Marrakech, d'après un plan manuscrit de 1585," *Hespéris* 27 (1940), 1-20.

53. It can be argued that many of these same qualities were also found in Madīnat al-Zahrā', begging the question of the degree of actual Ottoman influence. I lean towards considering Ottoman influence as more predominant in these areas, however, in light of al-Manṣūr's rivalry with the Ottomans and based upon the assumption, discussed above, that Mawlāy Aḥmad had actually visited the Topkapı in Istanbul.

54. Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 20-21, 75-76, 108-11.

55. al-Fishtālī, *Manāhil al-ṣafā*, 235-252; al-Maqqarī, *Rawḍa al-as*, 13; al-Tamagrūtī, *al-Nafḥa al-miskiyya*, 142-145; Aḥmad Ibn al-Qāḍī, *al-Muntaqā al-maqṣūr*, 367-380.

56. Stephen Cory, "Chosen by God to Rule: The Caliphate and Political Legitimacy in Early Modern Morocco," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002), 208-21.

57. For example, see Ibn al-Qāḍī, *al-Muntaqā al-maqṣūr*, 327, 352-353; al-Tamagrūtī, *al-Nafḥa al-miskiyya*, 141-142.

58. Ibn al-Qāḍī, *al-Muntaqā al-maqṣūr*, 352-353; al-Fishtālī, *Manāhil al-ṣafā*, 232-233; Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor*, 76.

59. European sources rarely specify explicitly that diplomatic meetings took place within the sultan's palace, although this can reasonably be assumed, especially in light of Ibn al-Qāḍī and Saldanha's statements regarding al-Badī‘'s function in receiving guests. For example, see Henry de Castries, et al, ed. *Les sources inédites de l'histoire du Maroc*, Angleterre, II (Paris, 1925), 11-17, 46-55, 109-11, 167, 200. Similarly, Saldanha records many meetings between al-Manṣūr and European officials.

60. Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 76-78.

61. al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 188. Ironically, al-Fishtālī states that al-Manṣūr asked him to change this line, along with another line in the same poem, because they made excessive claims and appeared to place him on the level of God. Al-Fishtālī cites this incident as evidence for al-Manṣūr's humility and deference towards God. *Manāḥil al-ṣafā*, 226.

62. al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 185.

63. Ibid., 187.

64. John Ralph Willis, "Morocco and the Western Sudan: Fin de siècle—fin de temps. Some Aspects of Religion and Culture to 1600," *The Maghreb Review* 14.1-2 (1989): 91-95. In addition to Willis, Mercedes García-Arenal has also made this claim. Her argument is succinctly presented in *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, 269-95.

65. Willis, "Morocco and the Western Sudan," 93.

66. al-Fishtālī, *Manāḥil al-ṣafā*, 252-54. As argued above, al-Fishtālī makes it clear that the incomparable nature of al-Badī‘, surpassing all previous caliphal palaces, showed al-Manṣūr was in a class by himself. In addition, al-Ifrānī writes that al-Manṣūr built al-Badī‘ "out of the desire to leave a durable remnant of his dynasty . . . and to assert its superiority over the (preceding dynasties);" *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 180.

67. Saldanha's writings would seem to contradict this assessment. He repeatedly praises al-Manṣūr for his building projects in Marrakesh, which added to the beauty and grandeur of the capital, and states that the city reached its heights under al-Manṣūr's rule. Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor*, 72, 130.

68. Deverdun, *Marrakech, des origins à 1912*, 1:392.

69. Ibid., 1:462. Similarly, Richard Yeomans writes that in Sa‘dī architecture "the Naṣrid tradition became a repetition of either sterile forms of revivalism or surface decoration which showed little regard for structural integrity." Richard Yeomans, *The Story of Islamic Architecture* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 113.

70. I would argue that later Moroccan palaces, despite the fact that they draw upon Hispano-Maghribī cultural styles, were more influenced by Europe than by an unbroken Hispano-Maghribī tradition. Though García-Arenal references Saldanha to argue that al-Manṣūr also imitated Philip II's construction of El Escorial, it seems clear that the most important referents for al-Badīʿ were Islamic rather than European. *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, 276.

71. al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 171-72. John Hunwick discusses this encounter, along with the historical background to it, in "Aḥmad Baba and the Moroccan Invasion of the Sudan (1591)," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2 (1962): 311-28.

72. al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 168-69; R. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations of the English Nation,* 12 vols. (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1903-5), VII, 99-101; Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor*, 84-86; "Lettre de Melchior Petoney á Miguel de Moura (20 Janvier 1591)," *Les sources inédites de l'histoire du Maroc*, Angleterre, II, 44-45; "Lettres de Lawrence Madoc á Anthony Dassel (11 Aout 1594 and 9 Septembre 1594)," *Les sources inédites de l'histoire du Maroc*, Angleterre, II, 83-88; "Lettre de Jasper Tomson á Richard Tomson (4 Julliet 1599)," *Les Sources Inédites de l'Histoire du Maroc*, Angleterre, II, 146.

73. al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 242-44; Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor*, 46-48, 70, 264-68, 282.

74. Stephen Cory, "Language of Power: The use of literary Arabic as political propaganda in Early Modern Morocco," *The Maghreb Review* 30.1 (2005): 39-56.

75. al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 245; Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor*, 46-48, 68-70, 264-68.

76. Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Khālid al-Nāṣirī al-Salāwī, *Kitāb al-istiqṣā li-akbār duwal al-Maghrib al-aqṣā*, Muḥammad Ḥajjī, Ibrāhīm Buṭālib, and Aḥmad Tawfīq, eds. (Casablanca: Maṭbaʿa al-Najāḥ al-Jadīda, 2001), 5:122; al-Fishtālī, *Manāhil al- ṣafā*, 264-265. García-Arenal does mention a plan by the sultan to build a large congregational mosque in the center of Marrakesh, much as the Ottomans and Andalusian Umayyads had done in their capital cities. However, the chaos of the last years of al-Manṣūr's reign coupled with his untimely death in 1603 meant that the project was never completed. *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, 277. Her source is Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor*, 182-84.

77. Cory, "Chosen by God to Rule," 252-82.

78. For more on this argument, see Cory, "Chosen by God to Rule."

79. al-Fishtālī, *Manāḥil al-ṣafā*, 170, 187-88.

80. "Mémoire de Moulay Ahmed El-Mansour pour Élisabeth," *Les sources inédites de l'histoire du Maroc,* Angleterre, II, 206-209; Georges Pianel, "Le Maroc a la recherché d'une conquête: L'Espagne ou les Indes?" *Hespéris* (1953): 511-21.

81. In speaking of this shared heritage, Grabar writes, "neither in architectural planning and construction nor in decoration did the Alhambra truly innovate. Thirteenth-century Mudejar art in Toledo, the art of Seville until the fifteenth century, and Moroccan monuments as late as the seventeenth century all use the language of the Alhambra, with only minor variations in quality." Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 171.

82. Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 125. Grabar argues that, had the Catholic monarchs understood the symbolism of the Alhambra rather than viewing it as an exotic jewel, they would have torn it down (just as Mawlāy Ismā'īl did with al-Badī').

83. al-Ifrānī, *Nuzha al-ḥādī*, 191.